

# **The Other Side of Darkness: Jungian Essays In Transformation, Version 1.0**

**by Kai Charles Forest**

## **Terms of use**

Copyright © 2013 by Kai Charles Forest.

This book is licensed under the Creative Commons Non-Commercial Non-Derivative 3.0 License, the full text of which is available on the Creative Commons Web site.

This means that you may copy and distribute this book for non-commercial purposes so long as you, the reader, respect three things:

-KEEP THIS BOOK AS-IS. Do NOT change, add, or take away ANYTHING in this book.

-ATTRIBUTE this book, when copying, distributing, or quoting it, to me, the author, as follows:

Forest, Kai Charles (2013). The Other Side of Darkness: Jungian Essays In Transformation, Version 1.0. Self-published. Downloaded from archive.org.

-INCLUDE a copy of this licensing agreement in any copy or distribution of this book.

For any questions on distribution, please contact [kaisf2004@yahoo.com](mailto:kaisf2004@yahoo.com).

**Note:** Version numbers are like software version numbers. Revisions and/or additional chapters will result in new version numbers. There are some stubs in this book; these will be future chapters.

[Keywords: Jungian psychology, Christianity, ancient Roman religion, mythology, Latin, alchemy, kata, karate, martial arts, spiritual emergency]

**Note:** Regrettably, the links in the Table of Contents do not work. However, the sections are correct.

## **Table of Contents**

[The Other Side of Darkness: Jungian Essays In Transformation, Volume 1](#)

[by Kai Charles Forest](#)

[Introduction: The Gate of Darkness](#)

[Chapter 1 - The Sali: Dancing Through Darkness](#)

[The Sali in Ancient Rome](#)

[The Sali and Kata](#)

[Kata and the Liaden Universe](#)

[References](#)

[The Gate of Iron](#)

[Aspects of the Mandala](#)[Abstract](#)[1](#)[Jungian Theoretical Background](#)[A Mythological Example: Romulus and the Founding of Rome](#)[Conclusion](#)[References](#)[Jupiter](#)[Jupiter Elicius](#)[References](#)[Roman Britain and Spiritual Emergency](#)[The Silver Fireplug: A Jungian Dream Amplification](#)[The Labyrinth](#)[His Name Is Shadow](#)[The Wall and the Other Side of Darkness](#)[References](#)

## **Introduction: The Gate of Darkness**

“La vie commence de l’autre cote du desespoir.”

“Life begins on the other side of despair.”

-Jean-Paul Sartre (twentieth-century French philosopher)

“You cannot enter the gate of brightness unless you have passed through the gate of darkness.”

-medieval Latin alchemical saying

Where is the other side of darkness? The medieval Latin alchemists saw the nigredo (Latin for “blackening” or “darkening”) as the absolutely essential first step of the process of transformation. Hundreds of years later, in our hurry-up dominant culture, the first shy beginnings of such a process are often diagnosed by mental health professionals - working under the economic constraints of short-term therapy, managed care, and insurance company administrators who decide how much “treatment” someone can get - as “depression” which needs to be medicated out of existence so that the individual can become “productive” again. Incredibly, after all the transformational energies of the Sixties, we are back again to a 1950s paradigm of paid work as the highest cultural value and economic productivity as its only concomitant. Like the “consumer-producers” in Ursula LeGuin’s *The Telling*, psychological or spiritual transformation falls by the wayside and is even considered dangerous. In LeGuin’s novel, the dominant culture considers such energies dangerous and does its best to stamp them out, to destroy them utterly.

It is also the only way to the other side of darkness. The Latin alchemists, writing between around the year 1000 and the 1600s, spoke of “the gate of darkness”. One alchemical saying went: “You cannot enter the gate of brightness unless you have passed through the gate of darkness.”

The operative phrase here is: PASSED THROUGH. The point is NOT to linger in the darkness, to justify the darkness, to exalt the darkness. The point is to honor the necessity of the darkness, painful as it always is, and to pass through it to the other side.

The Psalmist says of God: “The day belongs to You, and also the night.” Whoever denies the existence of the darkness in his/her own being falls into it all the more. Whoever does not recognize his/her shadow is devoured by it. But recognition – consciousness – is not about dwelling in it. As the author of the Gospel of Matthew says in Chapter 4, quoting the Old Testament prophet Isaiah:

“The people who have dwelt in darkness have seen a great light;  
Unto those dwelling in the land of the shadow of death  
A light has arisen.”

The alchemists, to whom Jung attributes a deep understanding of unconscious processes (though expressed in a language often difficult to understand), would understand this passing from darkness into the light as the passage of the individual consciousness – or body/mind/spirit/heart/soul – from nigredo to albedo, from darkness into light.

Part of consciousness is that energy which the alchemists referred to as separatio – separation or division, disidentifying from the energies while listening to them and dialoguing with them. Marie-Louise von Franz, a direct student of Jung and one of the earliest Jungian analysts, notes that for many people the attempt to kill themselves is a literalization, an acting out, of a need for transformation. Something, an energy, needs to die for the individual to transform. Tragically, many people do not see the symbolic aspect and try to do themselves harm, not able to maintain an observing ego and to separate themselves from the powerful archetypal energies of change.

Both von Franz and Jung himself emphasize the importance of mythic and symbolic understanding in order to come through transformations whole and indeed alive. Jung notes that in transformational situations, “understanding is a lifesaver.”

I consider myself an eclectic Zen/Taoist/shamanic/Christian Jungian. Or perhaps an eclectic Zen/Taoist/Jungian Christian. In any event these strands of my own spirituality have helped me to come through some difficult, sometimes literally life and death, transformational situations. Studying and writing about ancient Roman mythology and religion, the New Testament, Jungian/Latin alchemy, and Jungian psychology in general has been lifesaving for me. For many years I did this work in solitude. It has been a long time of preparation. And now it seems like the right time, the kairos, to offer these writings to others.

Working with these energies in a mythic, symbolic way has helped me to come, many times, to the other side of darkness. I hope these writings may help you, too.

## Chapter 1 - The Salii: Dancing Through Darkness

## The Salii in Ancient Rome

In ancient Roman mythology and religion, Mars was the god of war. But he was also a sacred protector. The month of March, named after Mars, was long the first month of the ancient Roman calendar year. Even after the calendar shifted to name January as the first month of the year, March retained its importance in terms of its honoring of Mars.

One of the first acts of the second king of Rome, King Numa (Romulus had been Rome's first king), as described by the ancient Roman historian Livy, himself writing in the first century B.C. when Romulus and Numa already lay over six hundred years in the past, had been to set up established religious practices for the ancient Roman people, whom he felt were exceedingly wild and warlike and so especially needed the calming influences that stemmed from involvement in sacred rites and observances. Numa appointed priests for the three main Gods worshipped at that time – Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus – and priestesses for the main Goddess worshipped – Vesta.

The priests of Mars specifically were called “Salii” - “dancing” or “leaping” priests. As noted above, they were first appointed by King Numa very early on in Rome's history, probably around 700 B.C. Here is how Livy, an ancient Roman historian writing in the first century B.C. when the Salii were hundreds of years old even to the Romans themselves, describes the creation of this priesthood:

Salios item duodecim Marti Gradiuo legit, tunicaeque pictae insigne dedit et super tunicam aeneum pectori tegumen; caelestiaque arma, quae ancilia appellantur, ferre ac per urbem ire canentes carmina cum tripudiis sollemnique saltatu iussit.

And he likewise appointed twelve Salii for Mars Gradivus and he gave [to them] a mark of office of a multicolored shirt and over the shirt a bronze covering for the chest; and the heavenly arms, which were called “ancilia”, he ordered them to carry and to go through the city singing songs along with the threefold dance [or kata?] and the solemn (or festival) dance. [my translation]

According to ancient Roman tradition, an ancile, a sacred shield of Mars, had fallen from the heavens as a gift to the Roman people. Legendarily, the smith Mamurius had made eleven copies of it. The twelve Salii bore the original shield and its eleven copies as they danced during the month of March, Mars's month, in sacred worship to Mars. Their ceremonies lasted until the 24th of the month. As they went throughout the city, their lodging was in special guesthouses (mansiones) set aside for the Salii.

Warde Fowler (1899) notes that we are fortunate to have an eyewitness account from Dionysius Halicarnassus, a Greek writer in classical Roman times, of this sacred dance. Here is Fowler's description (based on p. 39 text and n. 2, and p.41):

“The Salii leapt and danced, and continually struck the shields with a short spear or staff as they sang their ancient hymns and performed their rhythmical dances. Each was girt with a sword and carried in his hand “a staff or something else like it” [my translation]. Apparently, assuming he had seen the procession, he did not see or remember clearly what these objects were. A relief from Anagnia shows them like a double drumstick, with a knob at each end. ... The Salii in these processions were dressed in a trabea [short cavalry coat] and wearing a tunica picta [multicolored shirt] ... wearing helmet, breastplate, and sword. They carried the ancile [sacred shield of Mars] on the left arm, and a staff or club of some kind to strike it with. At certain sacred places, they stopped and danced, their praesul [dance leader] giving them the step and rhythm.”

The song that the Salii sung as they “danced” - did their kata - throughout the city, was known as the Salian Song – the carmen Saliare. It was written in a Latin so ancient that even the ancient Romans themselves – such as Cicero, writing in the first century B.C. – did not understand it. Nor, apparently, did the Salii themselves – at least not entirely. Some of the words seem to point to Jupiter as a light-bringer, a thunderer.

## The Salii and Kata

Although the Salii are, as noted above, described as “dancing” or “leaping” priests, it may be that they are the first warrior priests in the West who are in the tradition of martial arts practice known as kata. Kata may be described simply – far too simply – as a series of coordinated martial arts movements, looking somewhat dancelike, but it has a deep spiritual significance. Kata has been described as a “moving prayer” or as “moving Zen.” In fact, in his powerful book by that name, karate practitioner C.W. Nicol describes how his practice of karate, and particularly of kata, turned him from a belligerent young man, always ready for a brawl, into a warrior who was – paradoxically, yet not at all paradoxically – a man of peace.

What was kata’s role in this? The practice of kata, says Nicol, is the surest way to help anger dissolve. It focuses the energy – does not deny or even mitigate it - and allows it to transform. It is a way of honoring that shadow aspect of warrior energy, which Mars also had. “Mars caecus,” the Romans called him when he was in that state – “blind Mars”, who raged across the battlefield, indiscriminately killing friend and foe alike. The Scandinavian berserker gang is similar, and similarly was sanctified by the berserkers being in the service of the god Odin, also known as Woden (to the Anglo-Saxons) or Wotan (to the Germans). Many cultures have a re-entry ceremony for warriors. For example, there are African cultures that have elaborate ceremonies for helping their warriors to purify themselves of war energy and to return to civilian life, while still retaining their identity and experience as warriors – being re-integrated in the civilian culture in that way. When this is neglected, catastrophe can occur. In ancient Roman tradition, Horatius returned from successfully battling the Sabines against impossible odds, only to kill his sister upon his return. Like “blind Mars”, Horatius had not passed through a separation ritual from the shadow aspects of warrior energy, or had a chance to let it transform.

In kata, as Nicol describes it, there is the initial moment or state of focus and readiness, called “kamae”. The focus persists throughout the kata. Indeed, the best and most intense form of kata – usually only sustainable for short periods of time – is called “shinken shobu”, “mortal combat”. It is not about actual physical combat, although those were its origins, but about having the same intensity of focus and commitment and purpose that exist in a life and death situation. Finally, the kata ends with “zanshin” – a continuing energy and sustainable readiness.

In my own life, after over thirty years of martial arts practice, including kata, I have found kata not only lifetransforming but literally lifesaving. Recently I was hiking on a trail which, according to the hiking books and also online information, was supposed to be a gentle beautiful trail. I didn’t realize that the information in both these sources was 4-5 years old, and that, in the meantime, there had been extreme erosion of this trail. Beautiful it was, but it was also potentially deadly. I am not a rock climber or a mountaineer, and it was only by the grace of God that I survived the two and a half hours it took me to traverse this trail. At the absolute worst points, where the trail narrowed to 3-4 inches in width, with a sheer drop of hundreds of feet off the side, not only was I praying, but I also found myself moving in horse stance, the most solid and the most earthconnected of all karate stances. I had been practicing daily a kata for the past several months that included moving in horse stance.

Now, when I practice this kata, and get to those points, I say to myself: “lifesaving horse stance.” This, along with the help of many helpers and guides, and many aspects of the Divine, truly saved my life this day. Little did I know when I started the study of karate in February 1982 that twenty-seven years later it would save my life in such a dramatic way.

## Kata and the Liaden Universe

In the late 1980s, life partners Steve Miller and Sharon Lee started writing a series of books set in the Liaden universe. These sensitive and insightful books – which are also full of plenty of action – have characters who are recovering from various traumas and who surmount a variety of sometimes lifethreatening challenges. One way in which a major character, Val Con yos Phelium, surmounts those challenges, is through what the books call – as with the Sali – “dancing” and which is clearly a form of kata.

Val Con is from a highly aristocratic family, at the top of the heap on his home planet Liad. He becomes a Scout, exploring unknown cultures and civilizations. This fits him and he does it well. But the Department of the Interior – a clandestine quasi-governmental group that is trying to take over Liad – manages to get Val Con transferred from the Scouts to it (and it is decidedly an “it”, like the IT in Madeleine L’Engle’s *Wrinkle in Time*) and brainwashes him into doing its will. It destroys Val Con’s deep connection to music and to l’Apeleka – the martial arts form he has learned from his nonhuman brothers, the Clutch – eight-feet tall sentient turtles with a vast history and very high scientific and technological abilities.

Or so it seems. Actually these deep talents and connections have retreated deep within, to what Harry Guntrip calls – not entirely in a positive way – the “schizoid citadel.” But Val Con, much later, learns to call it his “safe place.”

Val Con first withdraws to practice kata when he is on a Clutch ship with Miri and his talents and abilities start returning. He practices l’Apeleka to get back into balance. This story, vastly abbreviated here, is told in *Agent of Change*.

In the sequel, *Carpe Diem*, Miri – who grew up in a dirt-poor environment with virtually no formal education, but who is extremely intelligent and possesses a number of extraordinary abilities herself, who is both very simple and very deep – says to Val Con, referring to the extreme torture and abuse at the hands of the brainwashing abusers, says of the programming they inflicted upon him: “You outsmarted it once with l’Apeleka. Done any lately?” He admits he has not. Miri then declares that this is the first priority: practicing kata and getting back into true balance.

Val Con does so. Later in the story, faced with an agent of the torturers and abusers, who is able to trigger Val Con’s programming despite all he can do mentally, Val Con finds his mind and his mouth taken over by the programming. But the abusers, the torturers, never touched the core of his being. The programming never touched his deep connection to kata. They never got that deep. And so Val Con is able to “dance” a few steps of l’Apeleka while he is forced to accompany the agent of the torturers. And those few steps – like the lifesaving horse stance steps for me on the lifeanddeath trail – save Val Con’s life. He is able to break free of the programming, to regain center, and to defend himself.

In fact, Val Con realizes that the ritual questioning that the evil agent is putting him through, and which he is

powerless to resist, and in which he gives, over and over again, the programmed answers, can never be solved or escaped in its own terms. It is like a video game. While in it, he is forced to follow its rules – the rules that lead to death, as Saint Paul taught us truly so long ago, especially in his letters to the Romans and to the Galatians: “Through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death.” To live, to live truly and freely, it is necessary to step out of the video game. And Val Con realizes that he has actually done this, with the help both of his practice of l’Apeleka – kata – and with the loving help of his lifemate Miri.

For finally, the narrator tells us, at the apex of the questioning – “When the Commander calls you to duty, what do you say?” – when ultimate evil seeks to enslave your soul, what do you say? And Val Con answers: “Carpe diem!” – Latin for “seize the day!” The text tells us that Val Con recalls that there had been another answer, a false answer, that would have destroyed his soul. But Miri had taught him the true answer, and he had danced it into place – with the kata forms of l’Apeleka – in Hakan’s barn.

Moreover, the narrator tells us that after this apex question has been asked, Val Con turns peacefully to his questioner. He is coming, not from a place of hatred or resentment, but from a place of centeredness and peace. This is how he breaks free at last of the last bits of the false obedience that the torturers, the abusers, the programmers had attempted to burn into his soul. But they never got this deep. Despite the fact that for so many years they were able to utterly and completely control his actions in the outer human world, they never touched his soul.

It is important of freeing oneself from the sequelae, the aftermath, of any form of abuse, of any form of programming, to recall what Jung says about what I will call two-dimensional systems of psychology: systems that leave out heart and soul, and only focus on “neurosis” and “sickness.” Of these personalistic systems, Jung notes that they reduce the mystery of the heart and soul to “nothing but” and that, as in Aristotelian A-notA logic, “tertium non datur” – “the third is not given.” They are two-dimensional. And if one lives in a world of two dimensions, some of its problems can NEVER be solved while remaining in that paradigm. They require the third, the third dimension, the third that is not given, the third that must be sought with all one’s heart and all one’s soul and all one’s strength and all one’s might, to quote Jesus’s rephrasing of the Deuteronomic command of loving God.

We do not know how the Salii themselves perceived their dance. No writings have come down to us from the dancers themselves. But perhaps some of them, like Val Con, found the steps of the dance in the ancient Roman month of new birth, the month of March, to be steps of a dance from the darkness of winter into new life. So too Jesus tells his students that whoever believes in him “has crossed over from death into life.”

## References

Fowler, W. Warde. (1899) *The Festivals of the Roman Republic*. New York, Macmillan and Company.

Steve Miller and Sharon Lee. (1989) *Carpe Diem*. New York, Ace Books.

Nicol, C.W. (1982) *Moving Zen*. New York, Quill.

## The Gate of Iron

Dancing through darkness ... There are many obstacles between the nigredo and the albedo. The mind images them in many ways. Sometimes they are encountered synchronistically in outer reality.

The New Testament Book of Acts, probably written by the same author as of the Gospel of Luke, and often conflated by New Testament scholars into Luke/Acts, describes obstacle after obstacle that stood in the way of the early Christians. One such terrible obstacle confronted Peter, to whom Jesus had said: “And you are Peter [petros=“rock” in ancient Greek], and on that rock I shall found my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

This story from the Book of Acts is about passing through a gate – an iron gate – that seemed insurmountable; in fact, more than one – and coming out, beyond all hope, to the other side.

6 ... in ipsa nocte erat Petrus dormiens inter duos milites vinctus catenis duabus, et custodes ante ostium custodiebant carcerem.

7 Et ecce angelus Domini astitit, et lumen refulsit in habitaculo; percusso autem latere Petri, suscitavit eum dicens: “Surge velociter! ”. Et ceciderunt catenae de manibus eius.

8 Dixit autem angelus ad eum: “Praecingere et calcea te sandalia tua! ”. Et fecit sic. Et dicit illi: “Circumda tibi vestimentum tuum et sequere me! ”.

9 Et exiens sequebatur et nesciebat quia verum est, quod fiebat per angelum; aestimabat autem se visum videre.

10 Transeuntes autem primam custodiam et secundam venerunt ad portam ferream, quae ducit ad civitatem, quae ultro aperta est eis, et exeuntes processerunt vicum unum, et continuo discessit angelus ab eo.

... in that night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound by two chains, and the guards in front of the door were guarding the prison.

And behold an angel of the Lord was standing there, and light was glowing in the cell; and striking Peter in the side, he woke him up, saying: “Stand up quickly!” and the chains fell from his hands.

The situation seems hopeless. It seems like there’s no way out, absolutely no way out. Peter is bound and guarded by soldiers and in a prison cell – triply captive, triply bound. Yet even into this place an angel can come. And one does, and wakes Peter up.

The way that the angel awakens Peter is worthy of notice. He (calling the angel he) strikes Peter in the side. This is no gentle wake-up call. This is a hard blow – not injurious, but jarring and very, very clear. As in: wake up NOW! There is no time to waste. An angel has come. This is a miracle.

But Peter must do his part too. The angel commands him: “Stand up quickly!” And – though not described explicitly – clearly Peter does so.

Then the text tells us: “And the chains fell from his hands.”

Like the young woman with the silver hands, whom von Franz mentions with regard to the fairytale of that name, Peter cannot be effective in the outer human world. His hands are chained. Hands are symbolic of being effective, agents, in the outer human world. This Peter cannot do ... until the angel calls him and he responds to the call. First Peter has to stand up – and do so with chained hands. In other words, he must answer the angel’s call – not with words, but with action.



It is in obeying the angel, affirming the angel's presence, receiving the miracle – not only with his mind, but with his body – that Peter can be open to the freedom which the angel offers. It is at that point – not when he is lying hopelessly, chained between armed guards, that Peter is freed. It is when he stands up and claims his place in the world, both physically and spiritually, that the chains fall off of his hands. First Peter has to acknowledge the angel's existence as real. Then Peter needs to obey the angel's commands.

In C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, there is a character who dabbles in magic for the sake of power but who doesn't really believe in it. Imagine his surprise when – with his young nephew and the nephew's friend – he finds himself in peril in another universe. A universe where animals can talk in human languages. But he is so appalled by this exiting from his twodimensional reality – “the third is not given!” “tertium non datur.” – that he convinces himself that the animals are just grunting and making meaningless sounds. And he holds to this – false – point of view so strongly that eventually that is all that he hears.

Peter, too, could have convinced himself that the angel was a delusion, a hallucination, a symptom of mental illness. Fortunately he lived in a culture that, by and large, accepted the existence of visions as very real experiences and forms of guidance. But this experience went even beyond a vision. In fact, it was happening in outer reality. It was real in a way even Peter's vision-accepting culture might not have acknowledged ... but for the fact that Peter was saved by it, as we will see later on.

The angel then commands Peter again: “Put on your belt and your shoes!” To put on one's belt (at least for men) in the culture of the time was to prepare oneself for action in the outer human world. Sometimes this is translated, in somewhat archaic English, as “girding one's loins.” And indeed this particular kind of belt fulfilled the purpose of underwear in the ancient world. It was much wider than what we would think of as a belt nowadays. In a way, putting on one's belt in this setting was much like/something like putting on a weightlifting belt – something to steady and strengthen a person for the task at hand. The NIV translates a similar word in Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians as “stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist”. Similarly, putting on one's shoes signifies and embodies a readiness to go out into the world.

Now the angel said to him: “Put on your belt and your shoes!” And he did so. And he said to him: “Put on your clothes and follow me.” It isn't enough for Peter to be in his underwear and his shoes. He's almost ready, but his persona in the outer human world – and clothes very much symbolize persona – is not yet complete. He needs outer clothing, outerwear, as well. The angel is well aware that in his culture a man wearing only underwear (the belt) and shoes would be noticed ... in the wrong way. He cannot fit in. He cannot blend in. And a certain amount of fitting in and blending in is absolutely necessary in order to be effective.

Interestingly, Peter also puts on his clothes in John 21, when, after Jesus's death on the cross, in despair he and some of the other disciples have reverted to being fishermen again. Jesus appears and the disciple whom Jesus loved realizes who it is and exclaims: “It is the Master!” Peter immediately puts his clothes back on, which he had taken off in order to fish. It is a reawakening of the call to discipleship, which Peter and the others had abandoned – the assuming of a persona that is acceptable outside of one's immediate little group. Not wearing culturally standard clothing among fellow fishermen is fine, but would not be acceptable to carry the Good News of Christ out into the world.

The angel's final command to Peter is: “Follow me.” This is a command that Jesus gives many times to

prospective and actual followers. The following usually involves leaving behind one's former life – total metanoia. For instance, Levi is told by Jesus: "Follow me." And he gets up and – leaving everything behind – follows Jesus. So the text reads.

Here Peter is called to leave behind his prison. That too is a calling that was known symbolically to the earliest disciples, the earliest followers of Jesus. Saint Paul says in his letter to the Galatians: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and don't take on the yoke of slavery again."

Peter obeys this call. He follows the angel. But he's not sure what's going on. In those days, having visions was acceptable – indeed, more than acceptable. It was, if not a standard part, certainly a well-known and respected part, of individual religious experience and practice. However, it was as clear then as now that a vision is not something that involves the body. Peter basically thought that what was happening, was happening in a vision, perhaps in a dream (for visions, as Scripture notes, can indeed happen in dreams).

And they passed the first guardpost and the second one, and they came to the iron gate, that leads to the city, and it opened to them of its own accord (or: all by itself), and going out they went into a village, and immediately the angel went away from him.

But in fact that was happening in outer reality. And in that outer reality the angel led Peter past the guards, past the gatekeepers, to the iron gate through which/out of which they needed to pass to come to freedom. And they did so. And as soon as they did so, the angel left. The angel was there to provide necessary help in a situation of – from a human point of view – total hopelessness and despair. Once that task was done – once Peter had been given the help to go out into freedom, to go out into the world again as Jesus's disciple and servant, to preach the Good News of the Gospel, the angel left. It was Peter's turn now. He was free. He needed to follow true path with all his heart and all his might.

## Aspects of the Mandala

What happens when one emerges from the gate of darkness, the gate of iron? Sometimes, it is like being reborn – "quasimodo genitus." And, like a newborn, the individual sometimes feels faced with swirling chaos. In this setting, how can one find a center? The mandala – an ancient symbol and practice of connecting with the archetypes of centering and order, provides a possibility. This semi-academic paper – originally written to gain entrance to the graduate program in which I am currently studying – describes aspects of the mandala. A future chapter will go into more detail.

## Abstract

The process of depth psychotherapy often causes extremely chaotic energies to emerge. This is in keeping with the alchemical saying: "Solve et coagula!" "Dissolve and reunite!" The process of dissolution can bring up energies that – like psychotic energies – could potentially dissolve the psyche without a reunification. During such times it is essential to have a unifying energy upon which the psyche can focus. In Jungian psychology the mandala often serves this function.

## Jungian Theoretical Background

A mandala is a geometric shape, usually a circle, a square, or a circle and a square put together (sometimes called “squaring the circle”) that helps an individual, and, as described in the mythological example, a community or even an entire culture, to experience an energy of centering and ordering. In Jungian psychotherapy and analysis, these patterns sometimes emerge spontaneously in dreams, in visions, and/or in drawings or paintings related to depth psychological work. Mandalas and mandala-like patterns usually occur when the psyche is out of balance, experiencing chaos, and needs to re-center.

Jung, in his commentary on the ancient Chinese alchemical text, “The Secret of the Golden Flower”, which was translated by German Chinese scholar Richard Wilhelm and which was Jung’s first exposure to alchemy, points out that mandalas may be drawn, and they may also be moving mandalas. For instance, they may be danced. (Jung, 1962, 100) The drawing of the sulcus primigenius – the “first furrow” drawn in a circular pattern around every new Roman city (the mythological example described in further detail below) - was also a mandala (Jung, 1962, 102).

For both the individual and the community the mandala can have a powerful energy effect. As Jung notes:

The mandala symbol is not only a means of expression, but works an effect. It reacts upon its maker. Very ancient magical effects lie hidden in this symbol, for it derives originally from the “enclosing circle,” the “charmed circle,” the magic of which has been preserved in countless folk customs. The image has the obvious purpose of drawing a sulcus primigenius, a magical [first] furrow around the center, a templum or temenos (sacred precinct) of the innermost personality, in order to prevent “flowing out.” or to guard by apotropaic [warding-off] means against deflections through external influences. (Jung, 1962, 102-103)

Thus the mandala acts to keep protected the innermost, most sacred parts of the psyche

The Self has many symbols, including flowers, seeds, and the sacred stone of transformation, the lapis, of the alchemists. One such symbol is also the mandala. It both protects the self and symbolizes the Self. By means of the mandala the attention or the interest of ego-consciousness is brought back to an inner, sacred domain, which is the source and goal of the personality and which contains the unity of consciousness and of life.

For Jung himself, the mandala emerged as a healing energy during his “confrontation with the unconscious,” as he calls it in his autobiography (Jung, 1963). This was a time when Jung discovered the archetypal images and energies of the collective unconscious in his own psyche. The energy was so huge and the realizations so shattering that at several points Jung doubted whether he would emerge from this confrontation with his sanity. It was only his anchoring to outer reality, Jung says - his family, his medical practice - that kept him grounded - that, and his emerging connection to the energy of the mandala. Jung came to be able to understand, by the shape and configuration of the mandalas that he drew, what his own energy configuration, his own psychic “weather,” would be for the given day. When psychic unity was lost, the mandala helped Jung to recenter and to find that unity again.

In the life of the individual, the emergence of mandala patterns – one or more circles, concentric circles, squares surrounded by circles and vice-versa, the Native American medicine wheel pattern of a cross within a circle, the circumambulation (walking around) of a circle or a square, and similar patterns - both herald and heal the chaotic energies which may emerge when the contents of the collective unconscious break through into consciousness. They help the psyche to return to the archetype of order, and they also help to focus energy within the safe boundaries of a holy space. In ancient Greece, this was called a temenos - the sacred courtyard or other enclosed area where sacred ritual and experience was protected, contained, and bounded.

On a psychological level, for many individuals, drawing or “dancing” a mandala is thus more than an

interesting or even powerful energy exercise. As Jung notes, when one is cut off from one's roots, "anamnesis of the origins" – returning to one's roots – "becomes a matter of life and death." (Jung, 1959, 180) The roots about which Jung is writing cannot only be personal roots. They must also be archetypal roots that go beyond the personal. In this sense, they are similar to the Zen koan: "Show me your original face before you were born." In its focusing of energy and return to the true center of one's very being, the mandala may perform this vital, lifesaving function.

## A Mythological Example: Romulus and the Founding of Rome

In the legendary founding of Rome, Romulus, the new king, represents all of Rome's citizens as he draws the mandala, the protective, ordering line and energy principle around the newly founded city.

The first century B.C. ancient Roman poet, scholar, and antiquarian Ovid describes this process in his long poem on ancient Roman festivals, *Fasti*:

A fitting day was chosen, on which he would mark out the city walls with a plough.

It was the time of the sacred festival of the Parilia. From then on the work proceeded.

[...]

And, once the fire had been kindled, the new hearth fulfilled its function.

After that, pressing down on the plough handle, he marked out the walls with a furrow,

A white cow pulled the plough along with a snow-white bull. (Ovid, trans. 2012)

The *sulcus primigenius*, or "first furrow" thus creates a consecrated circle, within which the city exists. This sense of consecrated space within and wilderness or untamed, dangerous space without created a symbolic boundary for the ordering of civilized life.

This circular pattern may certainly be considered a mandala. The *sulcus primigenius*, the "first furrow", was the symbolic energy vessel by which, and within which, the city was founded. All later Roman colonies shared in this ritual of founding. Most scholars tended to subordinate the drawing of the *sulcus primigenius*, which was a highly important symbolic and religious act, to the actual physical/material founding of the city. Yet there are ample indications among the ancient Roman writers themselves that they considered the *sulcus primigenius* the moment when the city truly came into being. (Eckstein, 1979) The forming of the sacred circle - on a physical level just, literally, a line in the soil - became an energy container with profound significance.

In addition, the lighting of the sacred hearth marked the consecration of the city. This was a way of welcoming Vesta, goddess of the hearth and home, and the hearth itself, the energy center of the city, into the very foundation of the city.

## Conclusion

The healing energies of the mandala often appear spontaneously in dreams, inner visions, synchronicities, and body movements at moments in time when the psyche has been cast into disorder and is seeking to reconnect with an ordering principle. In Jungian psychology, the psyche is a self-regulating mechanism that always seeks to recenter and rebalance during a time of chaos and confusion. Mandala patterns, expressing a deep aspect of the archetype of order, can help both the individual and the culture to find their way back to a sense of centeredness and balance.

## References

- Eckstein, A. (1979). The foundation day of Roman coloniae. *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*, 12, 85-97.
- Ovid. *Fasti*. Retrieved February 13, 2012, from [www.thelatinlibrary.com](http://www.thelatinlibrary.com), My translation.
- Jung, C. G. (1959). *Aion: researches into the phenomenology of the Self*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C.G. (1963). *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffé. New York: Random House.
- Jung, C. G. & Wilhelm, R. (1962). *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

## Jupiter

**Note:** This chapter is a stub. It will be augmented in future editions.

Among the ancient Romans, the chief god of their pantheon was Jupiter. It is probable that Jupiter's name comes from a very ancient name \*dius-piter (the \* means that this is a conjecture – in less fancy terms, a guess), which would mean something like “light-father”. Jupiter and Zeus, the highest ancient Greek god, are cognate Indo-European gods; that is to say, they share similar powers and functions within the pantheon.

Jupiter was considered to be the father of the gods. Jupiter, Mars, and Minerva (cognate to ancient Greek Zeus, Ares, and Athena) had the three earliest temples. Along with Vesta, known as Mother Vesta, they were the most ancient of the gods.

## Jupiter Elicius

How to determine what is the will of the Divine? The ancient Romans were, by and large, a practical, no-nonsense people who relied on very concrete things to determine this. In Jungian typology, it would probably be safe to assume that – again, by and large – they were a sensation/thinking culture. This means, among other things, that they would seek very concrete indications of the divine will.

And so they did. The Romans had, centuries before, invaded a land that was partially inhabited by the Etruscans. Most scholars believe – based on some of their religious practices and their calendar, whose seasonality is not that of Italy - that Etruscan origins lay in the Middle East. In their religious practices, the Etruscans were very focused on concrete indications of the divine will. For instance, they practiced reading omens in the entrails of animals. Some details of manuals regarding this have come down to us. Also, lightning was a prime indicator of the divine will for them and the Romans both. Both the Etruscans and the ancient Romans had as their chief god a god who controlled thunder and used it to show forth his will for them. The ancient Etruscan god was Tinia, and the ancient Roman god – far well known to us – was Jupiter.

As Jungian analyst John Weir Perry notes in his book on the archetype of kingship, Lord of the Four Quarters, the Etruscan god Tinia was cognate with the ancient Roman god Jupiter. Perry notes that Tinia hurled the “fateful

thunderbolt” that ended the old cycle and began the new cycle

One way to look at lightning storms is as a seizure. Recently a beloved dog died after experiencing – after having been very healthy his whole life – several seizures. My best understanding at present of this is that a seizure is like an inner lightning storm in the brain, clusters of neurons “firing” over and over again.

In my own life, I have had several lightning-related dreams that I know have to do with Jupiter energies. The most scary of those dreams occurred in late 2006, a few days before the New Year.

In this dream, I was looking at the sky. From the center of the sky – the celestial pole, in the center – came hundreds and hundreds of lightning bolts. They filled the whole sky. I knew in the dream, and certainly afterwards, that this was a momentous omen. Had I known more, I would have been very thoroughly frightened. For I believe now that this dream foretold portentous changes in my life, which I barely got through alive. One of them was the experience on what I call the life and death trail, as described above in the Sali chapter. Another was a descent into – for me – very deep poverty in the fall of 2007, starting almost exactly nine months after the dream.

In “The Psychology of the Transference”, a section in volume 16 of the Collected Works, *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, Jung notes that transformative dreams sometimes have a nine-month cycle, just like the gestation period for human birth. I had come to realize over that summer that a graduate program in which I was enrolled was draining my physical strength and destroying my spiritual being. To continue would have meant both physical and spiritual death. But student loans were my only source of financial sustenance. To leave that program without any prospect for financial support was one of the most frightening things I ever did. Yet I knew it was absolutely necessary. I had to fall back on whatever faith I had in order to continue. It would have been the easiest thing in the world to stay in this graduate program. Yet that was a slippery slope. This was a voluntary going out into the unknown which I had rarely done before.

There is a Latin saying: “Fata voluntem ducunt, nolentem trahunt” – “the Fates lead the willing [and] drag the unwilling.” Many times before and since, I was unwilling and had experienced the being-dragged. It is not pleasant. For whatever the reason, this time I was willing. Perhaps, all unknowing, I was relying on the dream.

## References

Rubins, Marion Ayer. “A New Interpretation of Jupiter Elicius.”

## Roman Britain and Spiritual Emergency

**Note:** This chapter is a stub. It will be included in future editions.

## The Silver Fireplug: A Jungian Dream Amplification

**Note:** This chapter is a stub. More will be included in future editions.

In Jungian psychology, dream amplification is the process of understanding a dream by bringing in associative

elements from archetypal sources, such as mythology, ancient religion, and alchemy. I often write amplifications on my dreams for my own understanding and edification – to understand the teachings of the dreams and to incorporate them and apply them in my life. Both Jung and von Franz note that the “aesthetic attitude” towards dreams and other aspects of inner work – i.e., “oh, what an interesting dream” but not applying the dream teaching to outer life – is worse than useless. It looks like inner work but is not. It is treating dreams and active imagination as a sort of picture gallery that one can enjoy but not take to the next step of what Jung calls an “ethical attitude” – incorporating the dream teachings into one’s own real, outer life.

## The Labyrinth

**Note:** This chapter is a stub. More will be included in future editions.

Kerenyi notes that “closed indeed the labyrinth is a place of death.” He quotes a Roman labyrinth with the line: “Hic inclusus vitam perdit.” “Whoever is shut in here, loses his life.” Kerenyi also discusses the fact that – when open – the labyrinth is a path of life. This assumes, as Kerenyi says, that one takes “the decisive turn at the center.”

## His Name Is Shadow

His name was Shadow.

In the summer of 2010, my housemate of 5+ years moved out of state to be with her family. She had been a pioneering teacher at a private school for decades, but this meant nothing in the wake of economic turmoil. She, along with many others, was laid off and decided to join her family. She had kindly offered for me to find a housemate (she was the homeowner) and I thought I had, but it fell through at the last minute. Then I found a tiny space to live in this area that I love. Unfortunately the person renting the main room hated “my sort” of people. So my landlady gave me three days to move out. It was a huge shock to have someone look at me with hatred and refuse even to step into the house with me. I had no place to go. I spoke with my pastor and she suggested that I announce it during the “Joys and Concerns” section of the service that following Sunday. That was the third day of the three days, and that morning I packed up my ancient Volvo with all of my worldly possessions and drove to church.

There was shock when I made my announcement. The congregation was horrified. And after the service three people came up to me. The first person said she had only a tiny studio, but I was welcome to stay overnight. The second person said she had a one-bedroom apartment and I could stay for a few weeks. The third person said that – as I knew – she had lost her husband of many years the previous year and had a big house that I could share with her until I found another place to live in this area that I loved. There was only one thing: She had a big dog. Was I OK with dogs? I told her yes, and later that day drove to her home, several miles north of the area that I love, but still within frequent visiting distance.

In fact, I did, and I do, love dogs, especially big dogs. Though I’d never lived with a dog, I always liked encountering dogs on my hikes, asking about their breeds, relating with them and their humans. My living

situations up to that point didn't allow for adopting a dog, let alone a big dog. And now, here, I was going to live with one. I was looking forward to it, but – if truth be told – I was also a little nervous about it. I hoped that would work out.

When I walked into my friend's house for the first time, suddenly a big black dog ran towards me and jumped on me, barking with joy. I was surprised and felt good about it. His name was Shadow. My friend said, "Shadow, DOWN!" and said that he liked to jump on people. I could see that. I liked it too. It felt like an expression of great joy. And I could see immediately that he liked me. And I liked him. No worries about what "sort" of person I am. He was a joyful being and expressed that joy to whoever would receive it. A few years later a relative of my friend said that Shadow seemed much calmer since he'd known me. I hope that's true. I know the reverse is true: I am certainly much calmer since I've known Shadow.

I thought I knew something about dogs, but I had a lot to learn. And Shadow was a good teacher. That first night, as I sat at dinner with my human friend, Shadow started growling at me. I was scared. This had never happened to me before. Here was this HUGE black dog growling at me. What should I do, or not do? My friend said, "Oh, he just wants some of your food– ignore him." I did, somewhat warily. I remembered later that evening a conversation I'd had at graduate school with a woman who brought her German Shepherd with her – a HUGE dog, much bigger than Shadow. She said that German Shepherds are always pushing the envelope, always testing to find out who's the alpha.

Shadow was half German Shepherd and half sled dog, and he certainly embodied this aspect of being a German Shepherd. As we got to know each other better, I could accept his pushing to be the alpha and he could accept that I was the alpha. But it took a while. Eventually I was able, when he started growling, to say: "Growling is NOT a good strategy – it won't get you what you want." And I would laugh, not at him, but with him, and I got the sense that, grinning at me, he gave me a dog laugh too, and was saying: "Oh, well, it was worth a try."

A major turning point in our relationship came when my human friend left for a week and I was dogsitting with Shadow. I had been worried about this. I was afraid that I would do something wrong with Shadow and by this point I already cared for him deeply. I didn't want to make any mistakes. And also – given the fact that we were still sorting out the who-is-alpha energy – I didn't want him to push me around, either.

That issue came to a head during lunch about halfway through the week. I don't really cook but I can boil water, which means spaghetti and rice (usually instant rice). I had made one of my favorite meals, spaghetti with tomato sauce, garlic, grated cheese, and broccoli. Shadow had never had this before, so far as I know, but it quickly became one of HIS favorite meals too.

On this particular occasion, Shadow barked nonstop for 15 minutes. I said, exasperated: "Shadow, if you keep barking, you'll have to go outside." He kept barking. Now, how could I set boundaries? Shadow weighed sixty pounds. I certainly couldn't pick him up and carry him outside. I'm a somewhat short man and my upper body strength is nothing to write home about. The only way I could think to have him go outside was to toss a treat outside and then shut the door, which I did. He ate the treat and then started barking again. I tried to ignore him. Finally, after about five minutes, he stopped barking. I finished my lunch, feeling slightly guilty, but also knowing that I needed to set limits.

After about a half hour, I went to the back door and let him in. I said, "Shadow, I like you and I want to share



my food with you. But you can't bark like that." And whether he understood the words (I personally believe that dogs understand a whole lot more language than humans think), or whether the banishment to the backyard for a while had made an impression – or both – Shadow never barked again like that. Not ever. Once was enough.

Later, on Web sites regarding dog intelligence, I learned that German Shepherds, as one of the most intelligent breeds, need very little time to learn something new. Usually one repetition is enough. And so it was here.

As this fascinating new person in Shadow's life (and vice versa), we spent a lot of time together, with the gracious permission of my human friend.

In the midst of all this there came a night for me of great darkness and great difficulties. There's no need to go into details here. On that night, I felt total despair.

That night Shadow slept outside my door. Or lay outside the door of my room at any rate. For I didn't sleep for hours. And I was so nervous that just about every hour on the hour I got up to use the bathroom that was down the hall. And every time I got up, there was Shadow, laying near my door, looking up at me. And every time I bent down and petted his head and said, "It's OK." Both Shadow and I knew that it was far from OK but we both seemed to take comfort in the connection.

Finally, around 3 am, after a lot of crying and praying, I started feeling somewhat better, even a little drowsy, and went out to go to the bathroom. I noticed that Shadow had gone to be with my friend. He was a very sensitive being and must have realized that I was feeling better. In the morning I left early, went to see my pastor, and stayed out all day. I needed some time alone to work with my feelings. By the time I returned, I felt better. And in my heart I thanked Shadow for caring about me in this crisis. I knew he heard me.

I realized after a day or two that this coming through what for me was a huge crisis together had created an indelible bond between us. As it happened, I moved out a month later, to return to the place on this earth that I love best, fortunately just several miles away, well within visiting range. As I left, my human friend said to me: "My dog has fallen in love with you." She asked me if I could come visit. So I started visiting about once a week.

As I write, I'm remembering all those times – and there were many of them – when I left and Shadow walked to the door with me. I would always say something like: "Shadow, I have to leave now. Be a good dog. Take care of [my human friend]. I love you. I'll see you soon."

This lasted for over two years, until the week before Shadow's death of neurological problems.

On these visits – though he had never done this when I was living with them – Shadow liked to lay his head on my shoe, usually on my left shoe. (This connection with my left leg will be important later.) And one time when he was resting, my human friend said softly: "Shadow, you really love Kai, don't you."

But to return to the fall of 2010. Shadow had started sleeping outside my room. At Thanksgiving, a big family gathering, one of the family members remarked on this – that Shadow must really love me to be sleeping there outside my room. And, indeed, as the year came to its end, Shadow became more and more protective of me and spent more and more time with me.

As an abuse survivor, being protected in this way was a new and powerful experience. It forged a bond between us, a bond of love and caring that survives. “For love is as strong as death.”

His name is Shadow.

## The Wall

Many years ago, I went to a martial arts workshop on the wall. Specifically, it was a self-defense workshop about using walls positively and helpfully in self-defense situations on the street. The instructor – whose name I unfortunately don’t recall – handed out a poem about the wall. I don’t remember the rest of it, but it ended: “All in all I love the wall.”

Walls protect. But they can also keep us from following true path. This short essay will discuss both aspects.

First, a travel back in time. Livy, the great ancient Roman historian of the first century B.C., wrote a history entitled “Ab Urbe Condita”: “From [the time of] the founding of the city”, meaning Rome. The traditional date for the founding of Rome was 754 B.C. Thus, Livy was taking upon himself an enormous task: writing about over seven centuries of history. Some of his writings have been preserved in full, while of others there are only summaries. What I’m about to discuss is, fortunately, preserved in full, for it was about one of the greatest and most crucial turning-point moments in ancient Roman history: the Second Punic War (Punic=Phoenician) of Rome against Carthage, in which Rome was almost destroyed as a city and as a civilization.

Livy begins to give us the backdrop – the “backstory” – of this turning-point war in Book XXI of his history. (In Livy’s history, a “book” is roughly equivalent to a chapter in modern books, and a “chapter” is a paragraph.) Hannibal, the great general of the Carthaginians – great, Livy tells us, not only strategically and as a warrior on the battlefield, but also great in both kindness and cruelty – is fighting the Saguntini, an ally of Rome. The Saguntinians have an interesting strategy, based on their understanding of the realities of the situation:

Saguntini ut a proeliis quietem habuerant nec lacescentes nec lacesciti per aliquot dies, ita non nocte, non die unquam cessauerant ab opere, ut nouum murum ab ea parte qua patefactum oppidum ruinis erat reficerent. ... et Saguntini murum interiorem ab nondum capta parte urbis ducunt. Vtrimque summa ui et muniunt et pugnant; sed interiora tuendo minorem in dies urbem Saguntini faciunt.

The Saguntini, since they had through several days rest from battles, neither provoking nor being provoked, thus not at night and not during the day did they ever stop from the work, so that they restored/rebuilt a NEW wall from the part of where the town was exposed and lay in ruins. ... and the Saguntini extended an inner wall from the part of the city that had not yet been taken. With the greatest force they both fortified and fought; but by being mindful of the inner things, within a matter of days the Saguntini built a smaller city. [my emphasis]

(Excerpted from Livy, Book XXI, Chapter 11. Latin text available at [www.thelatinlibrary.com](http://www.thelatinlibrary.com); my translation.)

This is a recounting of actual historical events. But these events also have an archetypal aspect.

When the abusers – of whatever name or type – destroy a part of the city, or even most of the city, one

withdraws within. This is what the Saguntini did. They did not waste either their time or their energy on useless battles that they knew in advance they would lose. They built where building was possible. And they stayed safe within that limited range.

For abuse and trauma survivors, the range of safety can sometimes be very narrow. And it can vary, sometimes from day to day or even from hour to hour. The important thing is to be patient with oneself and to trust one's instincts.

In Steve Miller's and Sharon Lee's wonderful Liad series, in one of the earliest novels, *Carpe Diem*, there is an image of inner healing, of inner safety and sanctuary, that helps and heals two people, who become lifemates, who both, in differing ways, have experienced extreme trauma and abuse. This concept is of one's inner room. An inner journey is necessary to get there. Once there, it is a place that no abuser can ever take away – or, as one character says of the abusers: "They never got this far!" The room he had built and/or discovered years ago was still there – safe, intact, a refuge, a sanctuary.

For Miller and Lee, there was a long hiatus in writing and publishing the continuation of the series. Now, in 2013, many novels have been added, and the series is flourishing.

In two of these newer novels, *Pilots' Choice* and *Mouse and Dragon*, yet another character has experienced extreme, lifethreatening abuse from a member of her family of origin – or perhaps better to say, since her entire family failed her (the one member who loved her was too young to do anything to help her), her place of origin. A dear friend, who wants to become her lifemate, hears that her safe place is her ship – and shudders to wonder if, before the ship came into her life scarce months ago, if she *had* any safe place.

Harry Guntrip, in his *Schizoid Phenomena, Object Relations, and the Self*, discusses what he calls "the schizoid citadel". Dominant-culture psychology, in its pathologizing, medical-model form, of course "diagnoses" the need to withdraw and heal as a "disorder", particularly if it persists over a long period of time (which is this hurry-up culture is naturally seen as a matter of weeks or months, if not days).

Jung, too, in both *Symbols of Transformation* and "The Psychology of the Transference", notes that what can appear as a depression is actually the withdrawal of psychic energy inwards to prepare for a (for the person) great creative work or other endeavor. In the I Ching, too (Wilhelm's translation and commentary) the theme of withdrawing in order to accumulate energy for later progress comes up many times. There is even a French proverb: "reculer pour mieux sauter" – "to step back in order to better jump". Dominant American culture, however, if it ever had such a concept, has lost it in the overwhelming hyperactivation and mania which has become culturally congruent since the proliferation of high tech to the personal level starting in the early 1990s. Some observers believe that video games and social media activate the same sections of the brain as chemical stimulants. It is an observable phenomenon that children diagnosed with ADD/ADHD calm down just as much when using such stimulating media as when taking psychotropic stimulants.

The wall encompasses enclosed space, safe space, sacred space. In ancient Roman, traditionally both the founding of Rome itself and of its many colonies also set forth the wall as the key element in a city's founding. The very first step in the founding of the city was the drawing of a sacred circle, the "sulcus primigenius" (first furrow) around the site where the city was to be built. It was this designating of sacred space in the form of a circle – a mandala form – that actually called the city first into existence as an energy being, an energy creation.

Thus far of healing walls. But what of the opposite type of wall – the wall that keeps an individual from fulfilling their true path in the world?

Almost twenty years ago, in the summer of 1994, a spiritual friend and I were talking about my – perceived and actual – limitations. Everyone has limitations, and they need to be acknowledged before they can be dealt with. At some point I must have used the analogy of a wall. My friend said: “What’s on the other side of the wall?”

For me, the other side of the wall consists of all those things that I haven’t been able to achieve because of – again, real or perceived – limitations. Most of these limitations, for me, come in the form of money. I have never had both time and money. For many years, I was relatively financially affluent and had, conversely, very little time to which to follow my own true path. Then I lost it all – almost all – in the high tech meltdown of the early 2000s. After many years, I am now a living-at-the-poverty-level doctoral student in clinical psychology – a path which I’ve wanted to pursue since at least the early 1980s, and which I’ve found now. But it was not possible in my former form of life – the life being constricted and damaged by the negative wall.

Another negative wall comes up as an energy structure in Ursula LeGuin’s *The Dispossessed*. Urras has created a colony on Anarres that is totally not money-based and also totally egalitarian, at least theoretically. In practice there are hierarchies, unrecognized but very real.

One such hierarchy is within the educational system for advanced science. Shevek, a brilliant young scientist, is walled off by his superior, who doesn’t want him to have any contact with the “enemies” in Urras. Since this superior controls all access to communication, Shevek is effectively cut off from his colleagues and peers. Eventually he finds his way to Urras where is honored and recognized.

But there is a catch. Urras is a “propertarians” society. Shevek’s innovations are craved by those who would use them to make profit, for economic or military advantage. Shevek becomes gradually aware of this. At one point in the novel he is at a rich person’s home who is hosting a banquet. Shevek gets drunk and suddenly starts talking about the differences between Urras and Anarres. He finishes by saying: “It is all I can see in your eyes – the wall, the wall!”

Anarres does not have a concept of ownership, whether personal or collective. Once there are owners there are walls. Even without formal ownership, Anarres too has walls. In the realm of ideas the walls are built in an energy frame to keep people within strict limits.

In *Hope for the Flowers*, Trina Paulus tells the story of two caterpillars who both – on very different paths – e become butterflies. As the first (female) butterfly is preparing to undergo this transformation, a very wise caterpillar-turned-into-butterfly friend tells her about the difficulty of entering the cocoon: “It’s a big step because you can never return to caterpillar life.”

The transformation is different for everyone. And, always, coming to and/or returning to truepath requires a shift and sometimes a sacrifice. For me, it required the sacrifice of high tech as a profession – a profession that I was reasonably good at, even quite good at, but which for me had no heart, no soul, and which took away uncounted tens of thousands of hours from true path. Whether I could have done this differently given the values and opportunities – and lack of opportunities – in this dominant culture I do not know. There is a Latin saying: “Fata

voluntem ducunt, nolentem trahunt” – “The Fates lead the willing and drag the unwilling.” Unfortunately I needed to be dragged out of high tech and it was an extremely painful process, with many sacrifices and reductions in material quality of life along the way. Hopefully that will improve, at least to some extent, although – like many students in this basically anti-intellectual and degree-hating culture – I will be saddled with crushing financial debt by the time I’m finished with my doctoral degree, three or four years hence.

Existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre talks of what he calls “contingence” – the circumstances and culture into which any given individual is born and by which they are affected. Finding a way through, around, and with “contingence” – the frame of the picture, if not sometimes the picture itself – is difficult. I try to enclose myself with healing energy walls and create a sacred space, as I also attempt to get beyond the negative constricting and limiting energy walls, some of which are strings, would I only know it, and some of which are very real. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, talks of Christ as the One who can dismantle the walls of “inimicitia”. This is usually understood as discord and hatred among humans, but perhaps it also can have a meaning of that negative wall of contingency that keeps us from true path. To know that there is a Dismantler, a Restorer of true path, is a path of hope. And it too leads in, and through, the chrysalis of transformation, from which there is no return to caterpillar life – only a going forward to butterfly life. A passing through to the other side of darkness.

## References

Miller, Steve and Lee, Sharon. (1989) *Carpe Diem*. Ace Books.

Paulus, Trina. *Hope for the Flowers*. Paulist Press.

Unknown. “The Poem of the Wall”.